

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### **Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #54**

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, August 16 for a **24-hour** period. Harvest from the 36-hour period that closed on Tuesday, August 14 is confidential. Shifting to coho salmon management, the Bering River District is anticipated to be on a 1-2 period a week schedule dependent upon escapement and harvest trends. For the week ending August 18, the Bering River District survey count was 10,090 sockeye and 2,280 coho salmon versus minimum anticipated goals of 2,271 sockeye and 2,533 coho salmon. During this survey, observational conditions for Bering River District systems were good. Another survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week.

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, August 16 for a **24-hour** period. Shifting to coho salmon management, the Copper River District is anticipated to be on a 1-2 period a week schedule dependent upon escapement and harvest trends. Preliminary harvest from the 36-hour period that closed on Tuesday, August 14 was 1,500 coho and 200 sockeye salmon with 13 deliveries reported. For the week ending August 18, the Copper River Delta survey count was 60,915 sockeye and 14,205 coho salmon versus minimum anticipated goals of 26,465 sockeye and 5,846 coho salmon. During this survey, observational conditions on the Copper River Delta were good. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown next week.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** **Harvest and escapement indices for the Eshamy District do not support another fishing period this week. Another 14-hour fishing period is anticipated for next week.** Preliminary harvest from the fishing period that closed Tuesday, August 14 was 150 sockeye and 2,400 pink salmon with 14 deliveries reported.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** Aerial surveys of the Southwestern, Montague, Southeastern, Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern and Eshamy districts were flown over the weekend. Wild stock pink salmon indices have been tracking below anticipated numbers in the Eshamy District and some portions of the Southwestern District, which has led to some area restrictions in the Southwestern District. An aerial survey of the Eastern District will be flown this week, with the remainder of the Sound's surveys taking place soon thereafter.

Preliminary harvest reports suggest that approximately 1.2 million pink salmon were harvested in Prince William Sound on Tuesday, August 14. Cumulative CPF pink salmon harvests in the Northern, Coghill, Northwestern, Southwestern and Montague districts since July 21 is approximately 10.2 million fish.

VFDA has recommended standing down in Port Valdez to allow for the accumulation of pink salmon needed for broodstock and does not anticipate recommending a Port Valdez pink salmon clean up fishery at this time. VFDA began their pink salmon eggtakes at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery on Thursday, August 2 and reports being 60% complete towards a final eggtake goal of 230 million green eggs through August 14.

PWSAC reports continued broodstock collection progress at AFK, CCH and WNH and has provided area recommendations for fishing in hatchery subdistricts on Thursday, August 16. Time and area for future CPF openings will be based on PWSAC broodstock collection progress and wild stock escapement indices.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** The Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH SHA, will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 14-hour commercial fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Thursday, August 16. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Tuesday, August 14 is approximately 216,000 pink salmon with 247 deliveries reported.

ADF&G otolith contribution estimates are now available for the Coghill District CPF opener on Wednesday, August 8. Preliminary estimates result in a harvest composition of 86% hatchery and 14% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock

harvest estimate of approximately 48,171 pink salmon. All of the estimated 301,070 hatchery fish harvested on this same date originate from PWSAC's WNH. ADF&G sampling of fish harvested in the Esther Subdistrict on August 8 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 50% female. PWSAC's run timing curves predict a sex ratio of 38% female for August 8 at WNH.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District, south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point, will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Thursday, August 16. Waters inside of the SHTF Markers in Sawmill Bay and Jack Bay will be closed for this fishing period. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Tuesday, August 14 is confidential.

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Thursday, August 16. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Tuesday, August 14 is confidential.

**NORTHERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northern District, excluding waters of the CCH THA and SHA, will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour commercial fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Thursday, August 16. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Tuesday, August 14 is approximately 273,500 pink salmon with 64 deliveries reported.

**NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Thursday, August 16. There was no reported harvest for the commercial fishing period on Tuesday, August 14.

**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Thursday, August 16. There was no reported harvest for the commercial fishing period on Tuesday, August 14.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Southwestern District east of Point Helen, waters within 1 nautical mile of Latouche Island east of Pt. Grace and east of the southern tip of the Latouche Island, waters of the Port San Juan Subdistrict, waters of the Elrington Subdistrict and waters of the AFK hatchery THA, will open to commercial fishing for a 14-hour fishing period beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 9:00 pm on Thursday, August 16. Waters of the AFK Hatchery SHA will be closed during this fishing period at PWSAC's request. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Tuesday, August 14 is approximately 688,000 pink salmon with 118 deliveries reported.

ADF&G sampling of fish harvested in the Elrington Subdistrict on August 12 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 55% female. ADF&G sampling of fish harvested in the AFK THA on August 12 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 53% female. PWSAC's run timing curves predict a sex ratio of 48% female for August 12 at AFK.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)).** Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Friday, August 17.** Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.